

spective. A number of questions, relevant to the book's goals, quickly come to mind. Is the world-systems approach really new? Does it offer innovative insights about Latin America? How does it relate to the other schools of thought presented in the book? Since the text intends to assess past and present theoretical debates, some attention to these issues is in order.

The authors strike an optimistic note in the preface and the concluding chapter. Theoretical model building has reached a "momentary plateau" (p. xi), they tell us in the first pages. Toward the end, Thomas Bossert claims that "some trends of theoretical debate suggest a convergence of thought that might encourage the synthetic merging of the perspectives we see evolving in Latin American development theory" (p. 319). To sustain this conclusion, Bossert asserts, first, that "quantifiers" are becoming more aware of the need to include historical context; historical-structuralists, on the other hand, are increasingly turning to empirical verification. The second point of convergence is that between Marxist and non-Marxist scholars—the former becoming more eclectic, the latter discovering the usefulness of a political economy perspective.

This happy conclusion is suspect if for no other reason than the fact that the theoretical and methodological matters at stake are deeply rooted in epistemological issues that go far beyond the study of Latin America and of development and social change. But if I am more pessimistic than the authors on this point, it only confirms the need to assess and monitor the state of development theory, which is, after all, the purpose of this volume.

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*New Social Movements and the State in Latin America.* Edited by DAVID SLATER. Amsterdam: Foris Publications, 1985. Notes. Illustrations. References. Pp. 295. Paper. \$15.00.

This volume grew out of a conference at CEDLA in Amsterdam dealing with an increasingly important theme in Latin America—the rise of new social movements and their relationship to the state. The volume does not attempt a comprehensive overview of all social movements in the region, but includes sections on urban social movements, regional social movements (particularly in Peru), and revolutionary change in Nicaragua and Grenada, with two articles focused specifically on the women's movement in these countries. It also includes two important theoretical contributions by Ernesto Laclau and Tilman Evers.

A key question in regard to these new social movements in Latin America is how they differ from past social movements, particularly in their relationship to the political process. In his introduction, Slater appears to agree with Evers that the new movements are not related to the repression of military governments and the bankruptcy of political parties in Latin America, yet much of the evidence

presented in this volume suggests the contrary. These movements arose specifically to fill the vacuum created by the weakening of leftist political parties, which even if they were not repressed by military dictatorships as in the Southern Cone and Brazil, had often lost their legitimacy because they no longer represented the new social actors on the scene such as women, shantytown residents, or the newly educated provincial youth (as in the case of Sendero Luminoso in Peru). The violent, hierarchical nature of Sendero makes it stand apart from the more egalitarian structure of the other new movements.

Above all, the new social movements in Latin America represent pressure to establish a more pluralistic form of democracy with participation from sectors formerly excluded from the political process. Urban social movements in São Paulo, for example, as Lucio Kowarick and Nico Vink demonstrate, have focused on problems such as the cost of living and collective consumption. This places them in direct confrontation with the state, and expands the concept of class struggle to extend beyond the workplace into the home and the community. It also helps explain the central role for women in these social movements, as the articles by Molyneux and Reddock show.

The new social movements thus call into question the traditional pivotal role posed by Marxists for the organized working class in the class struggle, particularly in areas like Latin America where this group is still relatively weak. This point is emphasized by Laclau, who argues that a strict class analysis is a product of Eurocentric universalism applied to Third World societies. It is imperative that we, as social scientists, recognize the political potential of these new social movements in Latin America, and this volume makes a good beginning.

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*The Catholic Church and Religions in Latin America.* Edited by THOMAS C. C. BRUNEAU, CHESTER E. GABRIEL, and MARY MOONEY. Montreal: Centre for Developing-Area Studies, McGill University, 1984. Notes. Bibliography. Pp. vi, 279. Paper.

The seven essays in this slim, but informative, volume deal with the complex relationship between Roman Catholicism and the variety of religious expressions which flourish among peasants and workers throughout Latin America. In the mid-1970s, when scholars met at McGill University to take up this question, a central concern to Catholic churchmen in the region was the institution's fast-declining influence in spiritual and temporal affairs. Some observers hastily concluded that the then recently forged alliance between Catholicism and the continent's oppressed was chiefly intended to shore up Peter's sinking barque. By extension, the incipient and innovative ecclesial base communities were either lures to win back souls caught up in syncretic religious movements or retreading